DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 110 SP 035 434

AUTHOR Koprowicz, Constance L.
TITLE What State Legislators Need To Know about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
INSTITUTION National Conference of State Legislatures, Denver, CO.
PUB DATE Jan 94
NOTE 5p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Conference of State Legislatures, 1560 Broadway, Suite 700, Denver, CO 80202.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT State Legislative Report; v19 n1 Jan 1994

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; *Excellence in Education; Legislators; Mission Statements; Organizational Objectives; *Policy Formation; Professional Development; Standards; *State Legislation; State Licensing Boards; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; *National Teacher Certification; Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

Lawmakers face the challenge of strengthening the teaching workforce by supporting and demanding excellence. The purpose of this report is to acquaint state legislators with the goals and activities of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and to underscore the ways in which state legislatures might work with the NBPTS to help create a high-quality teacher workforce. The mission of the National Board, established in 1987, is to assess teachers in a new, voluntary certification process that is meant to complement rather than to replace current licensing requirements. The NBPTS certification system involves three elements: (1) standards (establishing professional consensus about what teachers should know and be able to do); (2) assessment (providing a valid and accessible means to evaluate teachers against the standards); and (3) professional development (providing teachers with the opportunity to strengthen their practice through self-examination). Implications for state legislatures include: the potential to provide a fair and legitimate means of recognizing excellence in teaching; the encouragement of teachers to apply for National Board certification by offering salary incentives; and enabling nationally certified teachers to circumvent the licensing procedure in a state-to-state transfer. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

January 1994 Vol. 19, No.1

ED 374 110

What State Legislators Need to Know About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

By
Constance L. Koprowicz
Policy Associate

A nation striving toward a world-class education system needs a core of excellent teachers. Public school teachers in America today find themselves blamed for education's failures, yet they are not often included in policy decisions affecting their work. Lawmakers face the challenge of strengthening the teaching workforce by supporting and demanding excellence.

One option for accomplishing both of these tasks may come through the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which in 1994 will begin certifying and assessing teachers throughout the nation who choose to participate in a new and exciting certification process. This report acquaints state legislators with the goals and activities of the National Board and underscores the ways in which state legislatures might work with NBPTS to help create a high-quality teacher workforce.

What Is the National Board?

The federal government and many states are raising the standards of student achievement, defining what students need to know and be able to do when they graduate from school. But high standards can be achieved only if teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare students to meet these standards.

In 1986, the Carnegie Corporation's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession focused its attention on this issue and called for the formation of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Board was established in 1987 and its mission is "to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards, and to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools."

James A. Kelly, a former teacher, administrator, teacher-educator and foundation officer, heads the NBPTS as president and CEO. Governor James B. Hunt of North Carolina is the National Board's chair and Claire Pelton, a 35-year teaching veteran from San Jose, Calif., is the vice-chair. Under their leadership, the NBPTS has won the financial and organizational support of many of the country's leading foundations, businesses and public policy organizations. Included in the latter are the National Governors' Association, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers and Council for American Private Education.

The NBPTS governing board represents a broad mix of stakeholders in American education. A majority of the members are elementary and secondary school teachers. Academic experts, teacher-educators and union leaders also serve on the board. State and local officials are included, notably Ohio Governor George Voinovich, New Mexico state Senator Carlos R. Cisneros and Arizona state House Minority Leader Arthur Hamilton.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
T Love
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

An Information Service of the National Conference of State Legislatures
1560 Broadway, Suite 700, Denver, Colorado 80202. William T. Pound, Executive Director

SR035434
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Certification and Standards

It is important to distinguish National Board certification from the teacher licensing process. State licensing is mandatory and designed to ensure that beginning teachers meet certain basic criteria. NBPTS certification will be voluntary and is designed to identify experienced teachers meeting high and rigorous professional criteria. Therefore, National Board certification is meant to complement rather than replace current licensing requirements.

Other distinguishing factors involve the scope of certification, which will reach across state and public/private school lines. Since NBPTS certification is national, it has potential for facilitating interstate teacher transfers. Private school teachers are encouraged to join those from public schools as applicants for certification. The eligibility requirements include a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, three years' teaching experience and, where required by the state, a valid state teaching license for those three years. Candidates from private schools who are not required by law to hold a teaching license must submit proof that the school in which they taught was recognized and approved to operate by the state.

The National Board certification system involves three elements: standards (establishing professional consensus about what teachers should know and be able to do), assessment (providing a valid and accessible means to evaluate teachers against the standards), and professional development (providing teachers with the opportunity to strengthen their practice through self-examination).

Before attempting the formation of this complex system, members of the NBPTS Board of Directors defined developmental levels and subjects in which teachers would be certified. While some standards would be fundamental to all teachers, there was a need to distinguish between what an early childhood educator should know and be able to do versus the requirements for a science teacher working with adolescents, for instance. This examination resulted in the definition of over 30 certification fields with standards-development committees assigned to each.

Standards committees will use the following propositions as a basis for the development of national teaching standards:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

Assessments

The first official assessments will be available to teachers nationwide during the 1994-95 school year. Teacher assessments will not consist of typical pencil and paper exams. To become National Board Certified, teachers must demonstrate knowledge, skills and talent. This demonstration will take two major forms. First, candidates will prepare a school-site portfolio including, for example, descriptions of their practice, student work and videotapes of their classroom activities. Second, during two days of assessment activities, candidates will participate in structured interviews, work on collaborative activities with other teachers, complete a written essay examination and work on a series of real-life problems that confront teachers.

The National Board is taking great care to see that these assessments are rigorous, fair and accurate. Its Field Test Network includes 112 districts, 19 states and 165,000 teachers (nearly 7 percent of the nation's teacher workforce). Nearly 25 percent of teachers in the field test network are minorities.

Results of field testing will allow the National Board and assessment developers to determine if the certification procedure meets its own standards, and to improve problem areas before officially offering teachers the opportunity to apply for certification.

Professional Development

Continuing education for teachers is an essential part of the National Board certification system. NBPTS is devising professional development models that stimulate growth and change, and that encourage participants to take advantage of professional continuing education opportunities. In conjunction with the National Board standards and assessment processes, these models will help ensure the growth of a cadre of exemplary professional practitioners able to confront a broad range of classroom challenges and share their insights with colleagues.

The strategy is already paying off. In New Jersey's South Brunswick Township Public Schools teachers are meeting to develop a model for professional staff development that uses the NBPTS standards and assessment procedures as a centerpiece. In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district and its field test teachers have partnered with the University of North Carolina-Charlotte and the Johnson C. Smith College to develop a graduate seminar program to acquaint teachers with the National Board standards and support them in their portfolio development. Fairfax County, Va., has recognized the professional development value of National Board certification by awarding continuing education units to teachers who complete the National Board certification process.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Other school districts have joined forces to organize workshops for National Board certification candidates. Also, teachers who have participated in pilot-test activities have found that process to be a productive professional development activity in itself.

Implications for State Legislatures

Voluntary national teacher certification can be a tool for state legislators interested in strengthening the teaching professional. Aside from supporting the certification process, these assessments can help lawmakers deal with the teacher transfer process and with education for a changing student population.

Supporting National Certification

Currently, a teaching career is "flat"—those who wish to advance must leave the classroom. National Board certification offers an alternative to this problem. It has the potential to provide a fair and legitimate means of recognizing excellence. And excellent teaching, most people agree, will lead to improved student learning.

State legislators can encourage teachers to apply for National Board certification by offering a salary incentive for successful teachers, rewarding advanced or "master teacher" certificates to nationally certified teachers, offering professional development opportunities for teachers preparing for the certification process, creating a grant for teachers to encourage participation (the cost of the 1994-1995 assessment will be $975), or simply by publicly recognizing the National Board certification process as worthwhile. Some type of societal recognition for nationally certified teachers can be arranged at little public expense. A ceremony, a certificate issued by the state, or a feature in the news all can serve to promote excellence in teaching with NBPTS certification as the springboard.

Oklahoma has taken steps toward implementing such policies. Through its law, "Rethinking the Preparation of Teachers," the state's existing certification categories will be aligned with National Board categories. Teachers will receive incentives to apply for National Board certification and, once certified, will be rewarded and recognized for their achievement.

Teacher Transfers

Teachers often have a difficult time transferring from district to district. State-to-state transfers have proved discouraging at best. One roadblock is the variety in state licensing requirements. States can facilitate the process by allowing nationally certified teachers to circumvent the licensing procedure since they would have already demonstrated experience and excellence in their trade.

Two states are already setting this procedure in motion. In Oklahoma, out-of-state teachers certified by the National Board will be able to receive an Oklahoma teaching license without having to fulfill additional requirements. Nationally certified teachers will also be eligible for an Iowa license once the State Board of Examiners determines that the National Board's standards meet or exceed their own.

Changing Student Population

According to the 1992 *National Education Goals Report*, more than one-third of the children now entering kindergarten are disadvantaged. It is clear that these children present a formidable educational challenge and require specially skilled teachers. As one option, the Commission on Chapter I recommended a new federal program to permit states and localities to provide bonuses to teachers employed in schools where at least 75 percent of the children are economically disadvantaged. The Commission recommended that each participating teacher be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Furthermore, at a time when our school populations are becoming more ethnically and racially diverse, NBPTS policies and reforms strongly encourage minority college graduates to consider a career in teaching. Strengthening the profession itself can result in an increased and improved pool of candidates to the profession. The National Board is working with historically black colleges and other colleges with high concentrations of minority students to help prepare their graduates for certification candidacy. In fact, more than one-fourth of the members of the National Board and its standards committees are members of minority groups.

Summary

Why do state legislators need to be aware of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards? National Board certification will be an ingredient in public education and in education politics beginning with its first official assessments during the next school year. The issues discussed herein (professional development, teacher transfers, serving special students) have made their way into state capitols. Therefore legislators, often criticized for taking a short-term view of education issues, would be well served by being prepared for this new ingredient in education reform.

Framework of National Board Certificates

Early Childhood (Ages 3-8)
- Generalist

Middle Childhood (Ages 7-12)
- Generalist
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies/History

Early and Middle Childhood (Ages 3-12)
- Art
- Foreign Language - Spanish, French and others
- Guidance Counseling
- Library/Media
- Music
- Physical Education/Health

Early Adolescence (Ages 11-15)
- Generalist
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies/History

Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Ages 14-18+)
- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies/History

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (Ages 11-18+)
- Art
- Foreign Language - Spanish, French and others
- Guidance Counseling
- Library/Media
- Music
- Physical Education -

  Agriculture, Business, Health Occupations, Home Economics, and Industry

For teachers of special needs students—Limited English Proficient Students (e.g., English as a Second Language, bilingual education) and Special Education and Exceptional Needs Students (e.g., moderately handicapped, severely and profoundly handicapped, speech impaired, hard of hearing and deaf, visually handicapped, deaf and blind, and gifted and talented)—the National Board will develop assessments for teaching practice specialties to be added as a third dimension to the certification fields described above.

References

Ann Bradley. "Board Sets Field-Test of National Teaching Certificate." *Education Week*, July 14, 1993, p. 9.

1992 Annual Report. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Q & A. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1993.

Toward High and Rigorous Standards for the Teaching Profession, 3rd edition. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1991.

What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1992.